



Memorandum

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Vice Mayor Cindy Chavez
Councilmember Ken Yeager

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: September 18, 2006

APPROVED:

DATE:

9-18-06

SUBJECT: Actions Related to Horseshoe-Pitching Facility at Columbus Park and
Guadalupe Gardens Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) Approval of an amendment to the Columbus Park Master Plan to include a 21-court horseshoe-pitching facility;
- 2) Direct staff to contract with the Friends of the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens to manage the development of design guidelines for the Guadalupe Gardens Master Plan, incorporating planning for a dog park into the process;
- 3) In conjunction with this planning effort, further direct staff to include the Guadalupe Gardens Technical Committee, including the Friends, in the development of future capital and operating budget priorities for the Gardens, tied to the implementation strategy outlined during the planning process;
- 4) Funding for this process will come from either a combination of Airport curfew violation fine funding and City-wide C&C Funds, or shared three ways between City-wide C&C Funds, the Council District 3 C&C Fund, and the Council District 6 C&C Fund;
- 5) Direct staff to begin contract negotiations with the Friends upon approval of this memorandum, so that the planning effort can commence once the funding source(s) for this process become evident;
- 6) Direct staff to draft a policy for the use of the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens Visitor and Education Center Turf Area, and any other areas proposed as alternatives to the use of Columbus Park, and to bring this policy back to Council for review in one year.

BACKGROUND:

The Friends of the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens have served for many years as the City's non-profit partner in the development of the Park. The Friends worked with city staff and community stakeholders to develop a master plan for Guadalupe Gardens, which was adopted by the City Council and subsequently approved by the FAA in 2002.

The Guadalupe Gardens Master Plan is divided into two phases and was originally limited in detail. In the process of implementing Phase One of the plan, the board and staff of the Friends of the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens and the Guadalupe Gardens Technical Committee (composed of city staff including representatives from the Airport and PRNS, as well as the Executive Director of the Friends) concluded that, due to the general nature of the Master Plan, more detailed design

guidelines and a clearer strategy for implementation were needed, especially due to the incremental implementation of the Plan.

The need for a renewed planning process and refinements to the Master Plan are critical at this time, given the proposals for a 21-court horseshoe-pitching facility in Columbus Park and a dog park. The horseshoe-pitching facility has resulted in a re-interpretation by city staff of some of the land use restrictions that were fundamental to the original Plan. The City, the Friends, and other stakeholders need to have a shared vision for Guadalupe Gardens moving forward.

DISCUSSION:

Despite the role of the Friends as the City's non-profit partner in the development of Guadalupe River Park and Gardens, the Friends and the Guadalupe Gardens Technical Committee were not brought into discussions regarding the proposed horseshoe-pitching facility until mid-June of this year, when the proposal for the facility was in its final stages. Of particular concern to the Friends was the proposed location of the facility in Columbus Park. According to the Friends' understanding of the Guadalupe Gardens Master Plan, Columbus Park was to be the only sanctioned public gathering spot once the 120 acres of gardens had been developed. Given the proposed location of the horseshoe facility in Columbus Park, PRNS staff have re-interpreted some of the land use restrictions that were fundamental to the original Plan, freeing up alternative locations outside the FAA object free zone for public gatherings. The Friends are understandably concerned at the seemingly haphazard interpretation of long-standing use policies. For that reason, we are directing staff to draft a written policy for the permitted uses within the alternative locations outside the object free zone. Furthermore, we are directing that staff bring that policy back to Council for review in one year, to assess the efficacy of the new use policies.

In the aftermath of the horseshoe facility process, we are directing staff to include planning for a dog park in the development of the design guidelines for the Guadalupe Gardens Master Plan. In contrast to the horseshoe facility process, the Friends, the Guadalupe Gardens Technical Committee, and other stakeholders should be involved in the dog park planning process from the beginning.

ANALYSIS:

The Friends estimate that the development of detailed design guidelines, including the planning process for the proposed dog park, as well as an implementation strategy for Phase Two development of the Guadalupe Gardens, will cost approximately \$75,000. This cost includes the necessary project management that the Friends would provide and outside consultant expertise. A proposal to fund \$50,000 of the planning work is currently being considered by the Airport Commission from Airport curfew violation fine funding. Pending the outcome of that process, the additional funding needed may be drawn from the City-wide Construction and Conveyance (C&C) Tax Fund, or shared three ways between the City-wide C&C Fund, the Council District 3 C&C Fund, and the Council District 6 C&C Fund.

The final scope of work for this effort will be developed in coordination with the Guadalupe Gardens Technical Committee. This effort will be coordinated with other concurrent planning processes, including those impacting Taylor Street and Coleman Avenue, as well as activities of the Redevelopment Agency, which may affect the Gardens. Neighbors of Guadalupe Gardens, including

dog park advocates, should be recruited to participate in this process, and a representative from the Parks and Recreation Commission should also be actively involved.

CONCLUSION:

The Friends of Guadalupe River Park and Gardens have invested tremendously in developing and implementing the Guadalupe Gardens Master Plan. As an organization, the Friends serve as the City's non-profit partner in the stewardship of Guadalupe Gardens. A renewed planning effort is essential to the future of Guadalupe Gardens, and the Friends are well-positioned to lead this process.